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the reliquary now exhibited to the Academy is the identical brazen arm of which Smith speaks.

At all events we are enabled to give a tolerably exact date to this ancient piece of art, which, even in its present dilapidated state, exhibits great evidence of the workman's skill in inlaying and minute ornamentation of the most elaborate kind. It is clear that it must have been made before the death of Maelseachnaill O'Callaghan, who is stated in the first inscription to have made or caused it to be made; and, as he died in 1121, it is certain that we have before us a specimen of what could be done by Irish artists in inlaying and jewellery, within the first twenty years of the twelfth century.

Dr. Todd exhibited also the *Missagh*, or *Miosach*, a valuable Irish reliquary, supposed to have formerly contained a MS. of the Gospels or Psalms. The box, however, is now empty.

This beautiful specimen of ancient art is the property of St. Columba's College, Rathfarnham, and has been entrusted by the Warden and Fellows, with the permission of His Grace the Lord Primate, to the Academy, to be exhibited with their Museum at the Great Exhibition.

The word *Misach*, or *Miosach*, seems to signify a Calendar, and to be derived from *mí* or *míap*, a month; if so, it may have contained, not a Gospel or a Psalter, like other reliquaries of this class, but a Calendar. The inquisition of 1609, however, which will be quoted presently, evidently assumed the word to be the plural of *maire*, an ornament, for it speaks of it as the *missagh* or *ornaments* left by Columbkille.

An account of this reliquary, with an engraving, will be found in Sir William Betham's *Antiquarian Researches*, and it is mentioned also in General Vallancey's *Collectanea*, but the attempt there given, to refer the word *Miosach* to a Hebrew root, is totally absurd and groundless. Dr. Todd stated also that he could not agree with Sir W. Betham in

supposing the inscription to contain the date A. D. 503. The era of Anno Domini, as every chronologer knows, was not adopted at so early a period to define dates, and the character of the inscription would, of itself, even had there been no date, indicate the latter part of the fifteenth or beginning of the sixteenth century. The fact is, that the letter M, the first letter of the date, was mistaken by Sir William Betham for the words Anno Domini, in the contracted form, and the real date is MDXXXIII. or MDXXXIIII., for there is some doubt whether there were originally three or four units.

This is not said with any intention of detracting from the honour which justly belongs to Sir William Betham of being among the first to bring this, and other interesting Irish relics, before the notice of antiquarians. His book, notwithstanding such mistakes as that just noticed, was greatly in advance of the time when it was published, and has done good service in directing public attention to our Irish historical antiquities and ancient manuscripts.

The inscription contains a statement that the case or box now before us was ornamented by Brian, son of Brian O'Muirguissan (or Moreesan), in the year 1533 or 1534.

The inscription is as follows :—

brian mac brian ua muirguissan do cumbaig me a^o m.ccccc.
xxxiu.

“Brian mac Briain ua Muirguissan covered me, anno M.CCCCC.
xxxiii.”

This connects it at once with St. Columbkille's country : for it appears by an inquisition taken at Lifford,* county of Donegal, quoted by Dr. Petrie in a letter containing an account of this Miosach, and now in the possession of the College of S. Columba, that in the parish of Clonmanny, Donogh O'Morreesen held certain lands as herenach of the bishop of Derry, and coarb of the abbot of Derry, “which were given

* Inquis. Rot. Cancell. Hib., vol. ii. (Ultonia) Append. No. V.

to his ancestors, who were servants of Columkille," and that in the same parish certain lands belonged "to the Vicar and to the keeper of the *missagh* or ornaments left by Columkill," which keeper was undoubtedly the herenach of the bishop and coarb of the abbot, according to the ancient usage of the Irish Church.

The Miosach was preserved amongst the descendants of the original herenachs until the middle of the last century: when it was purchased by Dr. William Barnard, Bishop of Derry, who died in 1768, or perhaps by his son Dr. Thomas Barnard, Dean of Derry, and afterwards Bishop of Killaloe and Kilfenora. The fact, however, most important, as tending to prove our reliquary to be the Miosach, is, that it was purchased in the neighbourhood of Fahan, close to the parish of Clonmanny, where the inquisition of 1609 states it to have been preserved.*

This curious box was offered for sale with the library of the late Bishop Barnard in Dublin; but such was the apathy of the public at that time to these invaluable relics of antiquity, that it found no purchaser, and was bought in by the auctioneer, Mr. Vallance, from whom it passed to his successor, Mr. Jones. It was purchased from Mr. Jones by Sir William Betham, who presented it to the late Duke of Sussex, and it was afterwards sold in London, at an auction, to Mr. Rodd, an eminent London bookseller.

Some time afterwards Mr. Rodd mentioned it to Dr. Todd, as a piece of antiquity supposed to be Irish; Dr. Todd, happening to be soon after in London, called to see it, and recognised it as the Miosach; it was immediately purchased from Mr. Rodd by Lord Adare, now Lord Dunraven, and by him presented to the College of S. Columba in the year 1843.

Dr. Petrie, in his account of this reliquary, quotes also

* Vallancey, Collect. vol. iv. No. 13, p. 16.

from an ancient Irish historical tale, *The Death of Muirchertach mac Erca*, a passage which speaks of the Cathach, the Bell of St. Patrick, and the Miosach of *St. Carnech*, as the three great and celebrated relics of the Northern Hy-Niall and Hy-Connellians.

If this be the Miosach here spoken of, it is a singular circumstance that these three celebrated reliquaries now stand together on the table of the Academy, and will be exhibited together in the Antiquarian Court of our Dublin Exhibition.

It is fair to say, however, that Dr. Petrie doubts whether the Bell of St. Patrick, now before the Academy, is the bell intended in the document just quoted as one of the three great Hy-Niall relics. There is another bell of St. Patrick in his own collection, which he conceives has an equal claim to be so considered. It is understood, however, that Dr. Petrie intends to exhibit his bell also, and therefore the remark just made will still prove true, that the three great relics of the Hy-Niall may this year be seen together in the singularly interesting antiquarian collection which will be shortly open to the public in the Dublin Exhibition.

Dr. Todd was unwilling to detain the Academy with any further discussion on this subject, as he hoped on a future occasion to make some further remarks on the Miosach when there was not so great a pressure of business before the Academy. He omitted, also, all notice of the Bell of St. Patrick, because the admirable history of it drawn up by Dr. Reeves was already in the hands of all students of Irish archæology.

Dr. Petrie made some observations on the several remains of antiquity exhibited to the meeting by Dr. Todd, and directed attention to the fact that such shrines or reliquaries usually exhibited work of different ages, consequent upon repairs or restorations, or from a desire to increase their beauty by additions, according to the prevailing taste of the